

Whitney Meers
Staff Writer

Politically charged rhymes

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With a long, thick ponytail and a love for hip-hop, Peg-Leg may not initially strike someone as a serious political activist.

However, five minutes engaged in conversation with him shows he's serious about his desire for political and social change. A rapper for local hip-hop group Science-Non-Fiction, Peg-Leg has much to say about the current state of affairs in America.

"People will vote for their favorite music video on MTV but they won't pick who's going to lead their country," Peg-Leg said.

"Why shouldn't they be focused on something that might impact their lives or their children's lives? If there's another draft, we're all going to go to war."

Five years ago, he created FreePoets.com, a collaborative supporting local, independent and honest expression through music.

Groups constituting FreePoets.com defy stereotypical assumptions. For instance, last week's No CARB Show featured an eclectic mix of music, including regional hip-hop artists, electronic DJs and local jam bands.

No CARB, an acronym meaning No Cheney, No Ashcroft, No Rumsfeld and No Bush, is meant to send a political message and emphasize the need for social change. Friday's show offered a voter registration table and free anti-Bush bumper stickers for those who registered or updated their voting information. The Sept. 11 concert will also encourage voter registration.

"The whole point of the whole No CARB is definitely expressing my political philosophy. I am a Democrat and I want John Kerry to be president," Peg-Leg said.

Though the threat of hurricane Frances likely kept some people in last weekend, a sizable crowd filled the Masquerade's Infinity Room on Friday night. Early in the evening, break-dancers took over the dance floor to the sounds of DJ Blenda from WMNF 88.5's "Hip-Hop Flavors." Later, fueled by the musical energy of groups such as Trafficked Ambition, Spontaneous Habit and Science-Non-Fiction, the crowd chanted and grooved to the unconventional musical lineup.

"It's all about the vibe. It's all about, you know, being with people and being able to communicate with them. It's good to have a connection," said DJ Tourettes, who performed solo at the show and as a member of Science-Non-Fiction.

FreePoets.com Manager Jaime Kozlowski said about 200 hundred people showed up to last week's show.

"It was fabulous, probably one of the better shows that we've had," she said.

She said FreePoets.com began when a friend of hers introduced her to Peg-Leg. After learning he wrote and recited rhymes in his free time, she offered to create a Web site to promote his music and his vision.

Currently, the group's concerts are funded out-of-pocket by those who are part of the vision. All musicians and producers work other jobs so they may finance the project.

Kozlowski said putting together concerts and signing new artists is a learning process for everyone involved.

"I don't know how we learned it. We just did," she said.

Several musical samples produced by FreePoets.com are available for free on the group's Web site.

FreePoets.com present "The No CARB Show," featuring Science-Non-Fiction with special guest Astronutilus, Johnny Utah, Trafficked Ambition, DJ Tourettes, DJ RanMecca, and DJ Blenda at 8 p.m. Sat., Sept. 11 at Masquerade in the Infinity Room. Cost is \$5.